

إن بالمدينة نفرا من الجن قد أسلموا فمن رأى شيئا من هذه العوامر
فليؤذنه ثلاثا فإن بدا له بعد فليقتله فإنه شيطان

“A group of jinn in Madina have embraced Islam. So he who sees anyone of them, should warn it three times. And if it appears after that it should be killed, for it must be a devil.”

One of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) killed one of the snakes in the house and this led to his death. Muslim has recorded it in his *Sahih* that Abu al-Saib went to Abu Saeed’s house and found him praying. Abu al-Saib was waiting for him to finish his prayer when he heard some rumbling in the bundles of wood which were lying in the corner of the house. He looked and he found it was a snake. He was about to kill it when Abu Saeed gestured to him to sit down. After the prayer, Abu Saeed pointed to a room and he said, “Do you see this room?” “Yes,” answered al-Saib. Abu Saeed said, “There was once a man who was a newlywed and we went to participate with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Battle of the Trench. He used to ask the Prophet’s permission to go to his wife and the Prophet cautioned him to take along his weapons for he feared [an attack from behind by] the tribe Quraidha. The man took his weapons and when he returned to his family he found his wife standing between the doors of the apartment. He was enraged from jealousy and took a stab at her with his spear. She told him to keep his spear away and to enter the house to see what had made her go outside. He entered and found a big snake on the bed. He struck it with his spear and pierced it. He was bent upon taking it outside, but the snake had enough strength to bite him. No one knows who died first from that incident, the snake or the man. The people made mention of this incident to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), asking him to ask Allah to bring that man back to life. Instead, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Ask forgiveness for our companion. In Madina there are jinn that embraced Islam. if any of you should see one of them [that is, a snake], he should give him warning for three days. If it appears after that, it should be killed because it is, therefore, a devil.”

Important notes

1. This regulation concerning the prohibition of killing such animals is with respect to snakes only and not with respect to all animals.

2. The regulation does not extend to every snake but only to those that are found in the house. Those that are found outside of the houses may be killed.

3. If one sees a snake in the house then he should warn it, in other words, order it to leave, by saying something similar to, "I adjure you by Allah to leave this house and take your evil away from us, if you do not do so we shall kill you." If you see it after three days, you should kill it.

4. The reason that it is to be killed only after three days is a precautionary step in order to ensure that one does not kill a jinn that had become Muslim. If he was such a jinn, he would leave the house. If he does not leave, then he deserves to be killed, as it is, in that case, a rebellious non-believing jinn that deserves to be killed due to the harm that it brings to the inhabitants of the house.

5. There is one type of snake that is found in the house which we have been given special permission to kill without first requesting it to leave. In *Sahih-al-Bukhari* it is recorded from Abu Lubaba that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لَا تَقْتُلُوا الْجِنَّانَ إِلَّا كُلَّ أَبْتَرِ ذِي طُفَيْتَيْنِ فَإِنَّهُ يُسْقِطُ الْوَلَدَ وَيُذْهِبُ الْبَصَرَ
فَاقْتُلُوهُ

"Do not kill the jinn, except every one with two streaks on the back, for they cause miscarriages and take away the eyesight. Therefore, kill them."

Does this ruling that snakes are jinn mean that every snake is a jinn or only some of them? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الحيات مسخ الجن صورة كما مسخت القردة والخنازير من بني

إسرائيل

“Snakes are the forms of the transmutations of the shape of the jinn in the same way that the apes and swine were transmutations of the tribe of Israel.”

Satan is able to flow in the descendants of Adam like blood flows through a vein.

In *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَجْرَى الدَّمِّ

“Verily, Satan flows in the human like the flowing of the blood.” It is also recorded in the *two Sahihs* that Safiyya bint Hayy, the wife of the Prophet, said, “The Messenger of Allah was making ‘seclusion’ (*itikaaf*) in the mosque and I brought him his loin cloth during the night. We talked and then I stood to leave. He also stood with me and walked with me. I was living in the house of Usama ibn Zaid. Two men from the Ansar passed by us. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw them he went quickly to them and said, ‘It is only Safiyya bint Hayy.’ They said, ‘May Allah be glorified, Oh Messenger of Allah [we had no bad suspicion about you].’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) told them,

¹ This hadith was recorded by Tabaraani and Abu ash-Shaikh in *Al-Udhma* with a *sahih* chain. See Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Silsilaat al-Ahadith al-Sahiba*, vol. 3, p. 103. [That is the reference given in the text in Arabic. In reality, it is vol. 4, p. 439. Furthermore, al-Albani makes the following important point on p. 440, “Know that this hadith does not mean that the snakes that are in existence today are from the transmuted jinn. Instead, what it means is that some jinn were transmuted into snakes, as what happened to those Jews who were transmuted into apes and swine. However, they did not procreate, as is stated in another authentic hadith, ‘Verily, Allah did not make for any of the transmuted being procreation or posterity.’ In fact, apes and swine were in existence before that.”—JZ]